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INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2104
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5578
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 9174
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SUBJECT: GAMBARI BRIEFS CHARGE AND DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS
ON HIS VISIT TO BURMA

REF: RANGOON 394

Classified By: Political Officer Sean K. O'Neill for Reasons 1.4 (b) &
(d)

Summary

11. (C) UN Special Envoy Gambari phoned Charge prior to his departure from Rangoon on June 27 to give a brief readout of his June 26-27 visit to Burma. Gambari told Charge his visit was focused on the possibility of an upcoming UNSYG visit, including a possible agenda, program of visit, and possible outcomes. He said it appears the regime wants the visit to take place, but he declined to give details, saving them for his boss. He left an impression that many issues remained unresolved. He said the possible visit still carried "a lot of risk;" so any decision would be in the SYG's hands. Gambari had two meetings with the Foreign Minister. He also met with the UN Country Team and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, but not with the corps as a whole. On June 29, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps briefed diplomats with a somewhat more upbeat readout, leaving an impression that Gambari set a rather low bar for the regime. End Summary.

Gambari Briefs Charge

12. (SBU) UN Special Envoy Gambari phoned Charge prior to his departure on June 27 to give a readout of his June 26-27 visit to Burma. Gambari said his only GOB interlocutor was Burmese Foreign Minister Nyan Win. The two met twice, once on June 26 and once on June 27. Gambari said the meetings focused on the possibility of an upcoming UNSYG visit, including a possible agenda, program of visit, and possible outcomes. Gambari noted that the big UN players have made UNSYG Ban's decision difficult, with Russia, China, and Japan asking him to proceed with a visit, and the U.S., UK, and France "not sure," with the Aung San Suu Kyi trial still ongoing. Gambari said "it appears the authorities want a visit." They are aware they must give. They also have expectations.

13. (SBU) Gambari said he asked FM Nyan Win some questions

and got some responses. He said he was reserving the details for his boss, the SYG. However, he noted that, in part, he discussed his five-point agenda. He said he emphasized that "number 1" is the release of political prisoners, with the regime needing to do some "hard thinking" about the current ASSK trial. Gambari said he was expecting a back and forth to continue, including via the Burma PermRep in New York.

¶4. (SBU) When asked his impression of prospects for a Ban visit, Gambari said it is difficult to be upbeat, but he is not downbeat either. It is possible, "we can make this work." But the UN still needs answers. Gambari concluded, "There is a lot of risk," so the decision about whether to make the trip is up to the SYG.

Gambari's Meeting with the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

¶5. (SBU) Before departing, Gambari met in Rangoon with the UN Country Team and with Singaporean Ambassador Robert Chua, in his capacity as the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. Chua briefed fellow diplomats on June 29. He said he had requested the regime to allow Gambari to brief the entire diplomatic corps, but was told by MOFA that was not possible (though clearly there was time to spare). (Note: we are aware that Gambari also sought meetings with the PM and with Aung San Suu Kyi, without success.) MOFA arranged for Chua alone to meet Gambari at his hotel the afternoon of the 27th.

¶6. (SBU) Chua said Gambari believes the GOB genuinely wants the Ban trip to happen, since, the regime said, it "might" be helpful for facilitating national reconciliation in several areas. It would give the SYG an opportunity to get "an accurate picture" of Burma. It would allow the GOB to convey its message of national reconciliation to ceasefire groups and the opposition. It would allow the GOB to raise the question of more official development assistance (ODA) and to seek normalization of UNDP operations. And it might encourage lifting of economic sanctions.

¶7. (SBU) Gambari said he told the GOB it is important for Ban to bring something positive back, but he did not elaborate to Chua. Gambari noted his five point agenda remains on the table. (The points are: 1) release of political prisoners, including ASSK; 2) an enhanced, substantive, and time-bound dialogue with ASSK; 3) an all-inclusive and credible political process including elections; 4) the addressing of social/economic conditions, including broad-based national reconciliation; and 5) the regularizing of the process of UN engagement through the good offices mission.) According to Chua, Gambari suggested that if the GOB could agree to "as many of the five as possible, that would be a positive outcome for the visit."

¶8. (SBU) Chua said Gambari also discussed "logistics," in particular the SYG's wish for a "balanced and complete schedule." He would like to meet with "all stakeholders." He would also like to deliver a thank you address to the UN, NGOs, INGOs, and diplomatic corps for efforts related to post-Cyclone Nargis activities.

Comment

¶9. (C) Chua left an impression with the diplomatic corps that a SYG visit is very likely on, with Gambari's advance work setting the stage for, not exploring if such a visit should take place. With the Charge, Gambari was more nuanced, accenting "a lot of risk" that, as of Saturday, remained unresolved.

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